

# On Promotion of Wearing Hanbok for the Modernization of Traditional Costumes

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper starts with the assumption that in order for hanbok to be made known to the world as a cultural code representing Korean beauty, it must first be made familiar among Koreans with opportunities for widespread use of hanbok in a way which forms an understanding with the fashion sense of young generations, and that wearing hanbok must be promoted. We observe the contents and problems of past hanbok festivals and provide methods to promote the wearing of hanbok among the population, creating an occasion for mingling with various cultures in hanbok events which may be experienced by the general population, and developing hanbok as a tourist item and promoting the hanbok industry through standardized hanbok festivals.*

*Globalization of hanbok most occur through a combination of related academic fields, division of roles in fields of expertise, and a scientific understanding of hanbok. The re-creating of traditional hanbok will allow for affirmation of Korean image, a rediscovery of the value of Korean culture, and the establishment of cultural identity. The development of such global designs will form a foundation for hallyu wave culture within popular culture.*

**Key Words :** *young generations, globalization, popular culture, hanbok festivals.*

## I. Introduction

To modern people who speak naturally of globalization and global minds, traditional culture is an important factor in representing ethnic diversity and national image, and provides infinite possibility for future industry, so that it may safely be said that Korea, with a long and colorful history and tradition, is truly a blessed nation. The greatest task given to us, then, is to develop and advance ways in

which to express the identity of Korean traditional culture in a distinctly Korean image.

Among waves of post-modern values, for young people familiar with internet use and the bit of digital settings, the discrepancies between the cultures of the East and the West are a refreshing shock, and a chapter of future culture which must be reinvented by a symbiosis of the two cultures.<sup>1)</sup>

The first step in excavating Korean traditional culture and emphasizing Korean image to the world, creating a name brand of Korea which may take place in the global market as a high-quality product is to express the Korean sensibility which only we

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may feel in a unique type of beauty, making Korean imagery distinct. This must be made known to the world such that the world may understand Korean beauty, and by forming an understanding with them, Korean cultural codes may be made viable in the world market.

Hanbok, a national costume which represents Korea and which is distinctly unique, is an excellent cultural inheritance which provides an opportunity for the development of creative and realistic costumes through modern hanbok which carry on the traditional legacy. However, the current state of hanbok use is diminishing in all cases except for among the elderly in and in special occasions such as marriages. Therefore, a search for ways to maintain and advance hanbok culture and a basis for that cultural inheritance to communicate with the public is needed, and in order to make hanbok a part of everyday life, cultural events are needed which introduce the style and beauty of the hanbok to visitors first-hand.

This paper starts with the assumption that in order for hanbok to be made known to the world as a cultural code representing Korean beauty, it must first be made familiar among Koreans with opportunities for widespread use of hanbok in a way which forms an understanding with the fashion sense of young generations, and that wearing hanbok must be promoted. We observe the contents and problems of past hanbok festivals and provide methods to promote the wearing of hanbok among the population, creating an occasion for mingling with various cultures in hanbok events which may be experienced by the general population, and developing hanbok as a tourist item and promoting the hanbok industry through standardized hanbok festivals.

## II. Han style and Hanbok

Han style refers to the transformation of traditional culture into a brand, with the purpose of the formation of added value and employment and improvement of national image through the application of traditional culture contents in lifestyles, industry and globalization.<sup>2)</sup>

### 1. Contents of Han Style

The ministry of culture, sports and tourism announced a "Han Style promotion comprehensive plan" to be carried out from 2007 through 2011, with the goal of creating a renaissance of Korean culture in tandem with world culture.<sup>3)</sup> Selecting 6 fields of Korean culture(writing, food, clothing, housing, paper and music) to be developed into brands, expanding and developing the hallyu wave to all aspects of Korean culture in an effort to form the basis of creating a "new hallyu wave." Cultural value is re-discovered by selecting fields which have symbolic and representative value in Korean culture, with an emphasis placed on modern re-creation of said culture by making cultural contents approachable, marketable and global. With a goal of raising the national brand image value to 8th in the world by 2011, (2006, 10th in world) it is a plan to form the groundwork for developing Korean culture into a world-class name brand contributing to national image, global accessibility and new cultural codes.

Han style chooses 6 core fields with symbolic and representative value in Korean culture, capable of everyday approachability, industrialization and globalization. They were chosen based on the fundamental food, housing and clothing fields, fields representative of our traditional culture, fields with product value to be consumed in the global stage,

and fields which are unsupported and which cannot rely on market functions. The 6 chosen fields are writing, food, clothing, housing, paper and music, and each field is being intensively developed according to its particular traits as in <Figure 1>.

## 2. Hanbok and Han Style

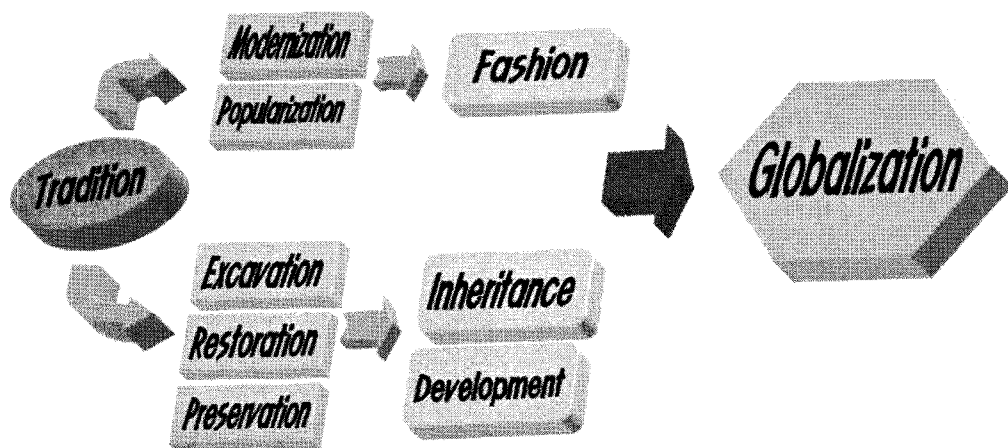
Through the occasion of the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the importance of traditional Korean culture in national image as a factor in increased national competitiveness became widely acknowledged, and along with a newfound curiosity as to whether independent Korean beauty arising from the nation's sensibilities can appeal to the global community, efforts have been made in industry and academics to develop cultural products. In July 25th 2003, in an international conference of next-generation growth industries of the ministry of industry and resources, Guy Sorman, author of the new wealth of nations,<sup>4)</sup> said of the future industry of Korean culture,

"In order to compete and be victorious in the global market, cultural added value must be created in exported products and the service sector, creating

high added value. But in order for culture to be exported or made into marketable products, it must be alive, global, and possessing both traditional and modern factors. Korea has the cultural resources to attractively form the brand image of 'Made in Korea.' Korean culture with traditional and modern facets can become a driving force in the development of the nation."

In the modern era of globalization, younger generations are given the task of promoting Korean culture throughout the world and representing the national image, re-creating a Korean beauty which adequately reflects the national identity. However, if traditional culture is considered to be in the realm of the past, unrelated to the present, one can only expect significant obstacles in modernizing traditional culture and excavating and developing Korean beauty in a way which would draw the attention of the world and give it a stake as national image. This is the basis for the Han Style development plans to globalize Korean culture through the modernization of tradition <Figure 1>.

In an effort to make Hanbok, one of the fields of the Han Style plans, a new name brand in the



<Figure 1> Globalization of Hanbok

world fashion industry, the ministry of culture, sports and tourism is promoting the establishment of a Hanbok development center, and placing efforts in hanbok cultural experience and education as well as program developments, such as offering free admission to museums or palace sites to people dressed in hanbok. Moreover, to educate foreigners of traditional Korean images, official spaces abroad are being used as hanbok fashion show locations.<sup>5)</sup> Fusion

hanbok designers are being nurtured to merge traditional costumes with modern fashion, and corporate networking and information flow regarding hanbok fashions is being promoted as well.

### III. Content and problems of hanbok events

Hanbok is being worn less and less, except as

<Table 1> Hanbok Events (2001~2008)<sup>(6)7)8)9)</sup>

Event Contents	Event Name	Supervision
Hanbok-related events (Festivals, Competitions)	2008 Han brand exposition	Ministry of culture, sports and tourism
	2007 Great Yeonhui Tradition Festival for the Chuseok holiday	SBS/Ministry of culture and tourism
	2007 Casting of young grooms and brides for 'Traditional marriage re-creation'	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2007 Culture day memorial festival	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2006 Korean culture outing for ambassadors in Korea	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2006 Han brand exposition	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2005 Teenagers' comet festival	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2004 New Year's hanbok fashion show	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2004 The 8th Hanbok day creative clothing competition	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2004 Korean folk art festival	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2004 Coming of age day event	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2003 Centenary of Koreans in America "Hanbok fashion show."	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2003 Korean-Cameroon diplomacy 40th anniversary Hanbok fashion show	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2002 "Centenary of Koreans in Hawaii" Korean clothing exhibition and Hanbok donations	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2002 Hanbok Day modern hanbok contest	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2002 Korean traditional costume festival	Ministry of Culture and tourism/ Hanbok culture society
	2002 International academic conference and world national costume exhibition.	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2001 Young-hee Lee Pyong-yang "National attire exhibition"	Ministry of Culture and tourism
2001 The 5th Hanbok day	Ministry of Culture and tourism	
2001 Hanbok culture conference '2001 Korean clothing exhibition'	Ministry of Culture and tourism/ Hanbok culture society	

&lt;Table 2&gt; Hanbok Day Events (2001~2008)

Event Contents	Event Name	Supervision
Hanbok Day-Related	2007 Han Style development comprehensive plans announced	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2005 9th Hanbok Day "Communication and connection"	Korean costume science foundation / Korean costume foundation
	2005 8th Hanbok Day "All together to spread our clothes across the nation." 3 days of experience events and exhibitions	Hanbok love council/ Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2004 Hanbok wearing among civil servants of ministry of culture and tourism during holidays, exhibitions and fashion shows	Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2003 7th Hanbok Day, modern hanbok contest, historical research, design contest etc.	Hanbok love council/ Ministry of Culture and tourism
	2002 6th Hanbok Day Events [Modern hanbok contest]	Hanbok love council
	2001 6th Hanbok Day Events	Hanbok love council
	1998 2nd Hanbok Day [Global image of hanbok] and fashion show	National folk museum
	1997 1st Hanbok Day	National folk museum
	1996 December 4th designated as Hanbok Day. (First Saturday of each month designated as day for wearing hanbok)	
Miscellaneous	1997 「Ease and life of hanbok」exhibition of popular clothing by era - 1st golden thimble award	National folk museum
	1998 「World image exhibition」- exhibitions and seminars regarding hanbok, wedding costumes, hanbok photos, hair styles, shoes, lifestyle hanbok. 2nd golden thimble award	
	1998 「Tungus Costumes exhibition」 3rd golden thimble award	National folk museum
	2000 「Ceremonial occasions」fashion show, celebrities appearing in fashion shows. 4th golden thimble award	Textile industry union
	2001 「Palace costumes as seen in Chosun costumes」- exhibition of wedding costumes. 5th golden thimble award	National theater
	2002 「World Cup opening festival, palace costumes fashion show」 6th golden thimble award	Deoksugung palace
	2003 「Korea-China-Japan Costume exchange exhibition」 7th golden thimble award	National theater
	2001 「2000 years of Korean costume culture 2000」	Kyungbokgung Palace
	「Three kingdoms era costumes」and 「Palace costumes」exhibitions	Subway Square
	Seminar on the footsteps of Hanbok	Korean national open university

special costumes for birthdays, marriages and holidays, or for special situations such as stage performances. Wearing hanbok is turning into such an issue that people who choose to wear it in everyday life or even during the holidays is a familiar topic for special broadcasts. When the Hanbok day was first implemented in 1996, even though the first Saturday of each month was designated as a day for wearing hanbok, this has not been made widely known among people directly associated with hanbok, let alone the general public.

In the course of 9 Hanbok Day events, with the timing of each event being unprecise, recognition and focus on the day are lacking. The contents of the events are comprised mostly of short events such as fashion shows, exhibitions, experience centers and competitions, and while promotion of the events were contracted to civilian groups after the 2nd Hanbok Day, the events have grown smaller and less widely publicized, reducing the degree of participation from citizens and related groups alike. <Tables 1, 2>

Government sponsored Hanbok cultural events have generally been aimed at foreigners or expats abroad, while events in Korea have generally been carried out by a more diverse range of groups, making it difficult for the general population to obtain information or participate actively.

In order for hanbok to maintain its tradition as the national costume of Korea, long-term hanbok development plans must be set. Along with popularization in order to bring hanbok into everyday life, methods for the globalization of hanbok must be explored, providing opportunities to spotlight the diversity and characteristics of Korean costumes, in various events which promote participation, festival-forming and globalization of hanbok culture considering elements such as time (yearly, monthly etc.) and audience (age

groups, social level etc.).<sup>10)</sup>

For the popularization of hanbok leading to greater interest among the public for hanbok and its uses in everyday life, the period for hanbok events each year must be solidified, making it a standardized period each year, repeatedly. Contents should provide opportunities for participation regardless of demographic. For example, various hanbok-related programs such as contests, fashion shows, experience centers and exhibitions should be provided in one unified setting.

#### IV. Methods for promotion of wearing hanbok

Most hanbok events tend to be singular and closed, with the participation of a select few hanbok related people limiting the cultural exchange with the general public. As understanding and interest in hanbok among Koreans is lacking, hanbok related events and the development of tourist items as well as foreigner-targeted publicity are needed. Therefore, hanbok fashions must be re-created in a multicultural setting, by providing opportunities for hanbok to be well liked and often worn, and through cooperation between industry and academics in the hanbok field, creating a long-term and systematic hanbok culture boom.

##### 1. Purpose and contents

By regulating Hanbok festival periods, various events are to be planned including hanbok designer collections, hanbok design contests, education on proper hanbok wearing methods, various hanbok-related experience events, academic conferences and education, experience based and exhibitional events for the promoting of wearing hanbok. The purposes

of the events are as follows:

Firstly, through a pan-population hanbok event, a gathering occasion for hanbok and its people is to be created, making an yearly hanbok festival a major national occasion. The theme of the event will vary each year, creating a sense of continuity, and citizen participation will be induced through promotions in various media, making the festival an event for the entire population, rather than a select few people directly related to the field.

Second, an opportunity is to be made for people of various fields and levels to share and communicate information regarding the academic, technical and publicizing aspects of promoting the hanbok fashion industry and developing hanbok as a global brand. This is to ensure that Korean people may love, boast and frequently wear hanbok as a national costume. Also to be provided are opportunities for experts of the field to meet with the general population, creating a collective consciousness regarding the hanbok industry and its development, leading the popularization of hanbok and its trends.

Third, opportunities for the general population and foreigners in Korea to become acquainted with hanbok are to be provided, while using mass communications to demonstrate the beauty of hanbok and its favor among Koreans to the world.

Fourth, educational opportunities are to be provided to young people in all levels of education so that they may see, feel and experience hanbok in a way that familiarizes them to the style. Traditional hair style re-creations, paper folding to create hanbok, face painting and other events will be aimed at elementary, middle and high school students reducing the sense of distance they feel from hanbok and allowing them to recognize it as a customary part of everyday life, so that they may discover an

opportunity to pursue hanbok fashion as a promising field of the future.

Fifth, examples of settings in which hanbok designers may open comprehensive collections(ex: SFAA, KFDA, NWS etc.) are to be provided. This will advance hanbok design development and overall levels, and promote hanbok related industries, while serving as a basis for making the festival a tourist item which may heighten the national image.

## 2. Specific contents and programs

### 1) Regulation of hanbok related cultural festivals

Through the popularization of hanbok, for a cultural event in which the entire population may participate, the event must take into account diverse demographics at all times, not limited to a select few but open to all, leading the popularization and everyday use of hanbok. Accordingly, each event must be divided into opening ceremonies, regular events, theme events, and free events. The opening ceremonies must designate events which may become an issue each year, while regular events should include hanbok designer collections which gather designs by various contributors in one place, as well as hanbok design competitions to unearth new designers for the future. Theme events are to play a role as a multi-cultural festival and tourist item which may publicize Korea and its hanbok culture to foreigners residing in Korea, multi-cultural families and children of expats living abroad.<sup>11)</sup>

Free events may include experience events for young students such as traditional marriage ceremonies, family outing photo contests, quiz contests regarding hanbok and other supplemental events to publicize the beauty of hanbok and allow the public to familiarize itself with hanbok.

## 2) Hanbok cultural education (Traditional costume culture leader course)

In order to maintain national identity and tradition through nation-wide hanbok wearing, lifetime education institutes are to create traditional costume culture leader courses to develop personnel with expertise in Korean costume culture.

Education of the variety and tradition of Korean costume culture through history, the use of eco-friendly materials for products for infants, products for patients of skin ailments and other topics may be covered for the promotion of good health among the population, as well as courses teaching parents of students how to make hanbok, or classes in manners and tea customs as supplements to the wearing of hanbok.

## 3) Cultural experiences

As hanbok is the sole culture which maintains tradition and uniqueness as a nation costume representing Korea, experience-based education should include learning how to wear a hanbok, various lifestyle manners related to hanbok, and the tradition behind hanbok, activities which related and expand from hanbok studies to matters of cultural interest and etiquette. The use of artifacts and historical space and visits to significant events or sites should also be considered in hanbok education.

## 4) Management of traditional costume culture center

Educators, corporations, researchers students and various personnel relating hanbok should be comprehensively managed, so that they may be effectively employed in the hanbok industry. Exhibition spaces, museums, libraries, research centers, human resources, PR centers, educational spaces and performance spaces will all be managed.

## 3. Expected effects

### 1) Hanbok cultural perspective

First, through the advancement of familiarity with wearing hanbok, a promotion of hanbok itself may be expected. The establishment of an industrial basis for hanbok as well as a globalization of Han style may be approached through an increased acceptance of hanbok. The history and culture of hanbok may be publicized, which in turn may be used as a factor for increased competitive edge.

Second, a synergy effect may be created between the internationalization of hallyu wave cultural contents, marketing of hallyu wave culture, improved national image, heightened level of cultural education domestically and overseas cultural education, aiding the globalization of hallyu wave culture through the spread of hanbok culture.

Third, through education on proper hanbok attire and related traditional etiquette, a better sense of national identity may be reached. Moreover, by preparing experience spaces which may be shared by individual and family units alike, open education in which participants actively experience traditional culture will allow recognition of culture as a coexistent part of everyday life.

### 2) Hanbok industrial perspective

Discovery and of fostering of personnel in the hanbok field and leadership in hanbok related design may be expected. This may be applied for various uses in industry as a symbol and icon of Korea. Advances in industry and quantitative earnings growth may also be expected. By providing publicity and events both in Korea and overseas, a boost to the tourism industry can also contribute to the competitiveness of cultural industry. With specialized information and a combination of Korean cultural



standards with modern sensibilities and entertainment factors, an expansion of user demographics can be attained. Connection and application to cultural products and resulting sales increases makes marketing of resources and products possible, promoting interest in varied and high-end hanbok.

Moreover, creators of hanbok may gain opportunities to create and reveal traditional hanbok pieces, so that various creative and realistic hanbok designs befitting modern trends may be developed, taking place as new leading popular codes. Through the advancement of the hanbok design industry, solutions for economic problems such as low growth rates and high unemployment rates may be obtained, as well as economic and employment impact of the hanbok cultural industry.

## V. Conclusions

The modernization of traditional costumes is equivalent to their globalization. In order for Korea's hanbok to undergo globalization, a common ground must be formed with the fashion sense of the global population, and the first step towards such development must come from young Koreans' recognition of the beauty of hanbok and their love for hanbok as the national costume. For hanbok to maintain tradition as a national costume, long-term driving plans are needed, and while uplifting national brand value through advancement of Korean cultural image, this will also lead to economic added value and employment increases through industrialization of culture.

Globalization of hanbok most occur through a combination of related academic fields, division of roles in fields of expertise, and a scientific understanding of hanbok. The re-creating of traditional hanbok will allow for affirmation of Korean image, a rediscovery of the value of Korean culture, and

the establishment of cultural identity. The development of such global designs will form a foundation for hallyu wave culture within popular culture.

Also, by collecting and organizing data for information exchange between traditional hanbok culture and other fields of academics, and by digitally converting such data, a symbiosis may be attained between cutting edge technology and traditional culture. Alvin Toffler's statement (2001) that 'Korea must create new industries and markets through combinations of IT and BT and the future of Korea is dependent on such combinations' demonstrates that a combination of tradition and new culture (IT) must lead a future drive for traditional culture and hanbok.

Role divisions in academic sectors and various fields of expertise (scholar, on site expert, product manufacturing expert etc.) may provide an enormous foundation from which hanbok culture may be inherited and advanced. Excavation and restoration of artifacts, preservation science, contents and data searches, research and production of fabrics, museum display research, technical planning and development and government cultural policies are among the various fields of expertise in which research by experts and the efforts of industry professional may realize the maintenance and modernization of through new design developments, which would re-illuminate the position of hanbok culture and form a cornerstone for the globalization of hanbok. Moreover, hanbok must be recognized as a type of applied science, and if active research on the functionality of costumes (durability, mobility, sanitation, washing etc.) is performed in tandem with new developments in color and design, increasing satisfaction among those given a choice, a new opportunity for the re-creation of hanbok may be provided through a coexistence between tradition and modernity.

Hanbok related events up to the present have mostly been singular with limited opportunities for participation or exchange with the general public. The fact is that it has been considered natural for the events to encompass only experts in the field as a way of inheriting traditional culture and publicizing Korea. In the rapidly changing global market, the traditional culture of each nation is an important economic value for the country, and efforts to develop contents which examine the possibility of development into high added value industry are not new, yet the issue of how deeply modern young generations, who must lead such movements, are familiar with Korean traditional culture through education and experience is a matter which has not gained significant attention.

But in order to spread traditional culture throughout the global market and highlight it as a national image to represent Korean culture among foreigners, expert groups to inherit and develop traditional culture and new experts to modernize and re-create the culture in a global context must participate cooperatively, forming an understanding with modern people and creating new traditional culture contents which may be widely accepted.

Therefore, hanbok related events must go beyond a basic concept of personal interest or additional events intended mainly for entertainment, being considered instead well-organized with longer term vision, creating open opportunities for the public to experience hanbok and forming a sense of familiarity with the costumes among all demographics, thereby promoting a natural growth of the hanbok industry. Such attempts will provide new challenges to hanbok related personnel who have remained content with hanbok as a traditional culture requiring only maintenance of the past, and act as a catalyst driving a new wind in hanbok culture.

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